

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

All the Year Round

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A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

THE THIRD PART.

CHAPTER VII. "AND WHY, DOLORES?"

"DON'T stay too long, Aunt Lillias, or we shall keep Julian waiting," said Dolores, as she and Miss Merivale followed a nimble-footed page through one of the corridors of the Langham Hotel, on their way to Captain and Mrs. Wharton's rooms. The words, uttered in the girl's clear, gleeful tones, caught the attention of a lady advancing towards them, and she looked earnestly at the speaker.

"Julian!" she thought; "it is not a common name. Perhaps she means him, and these are the friends he sometimes talks of. What a graceful woman, and what a lovely girl! I shall be able to describe them both to him; it would be odd if they should prove to be his friends."

Miss Merivale and Dolores had passed her only by a few steps, when the page ushered them into the room which the lady had just left. She had turned her head to look after them and perceived this.

"They are calling on Mrs. Wharton; I shall hear about them to-morrow," said the lady to herself, and then she went her way to the next instalment of her day's work, noticing as she passed out of the glass portico, an open carriage with a handsome pair of grey ponies, which chanced to be the only equipage in waiting. A groom stood at the ponies' heads, a pair of driving-gloves lay on the light, summer carriage-rug. "I wonder whether it's that pretty girl who drives those dear ponies," thought the lady.

Miss Merivale and Dolores were re-

ceived with great cordiality by Captain and Mrs. Wharton, and after a few minutes Rodney arrived. He saw at once that the mutual impressions of his friends were favourable, and he devoted himself to Mrs. Wharton and Dolores, in order to leave Miss Merivale free to talk with Captain Wharton.

"My daughter will be here immediately," Mrs. Wharton explained. "She has settled with Miss Denzil," she added, addressing Rodney, as one who would understand the allusion; and then she told Dolores that so devoted was Effie to music that she never failed to give some part of every day to it, no matter where she might be, and, since she came to London, had been so fortunate as to secure a lady, highly recommended, to play duets with her.

"Miss Denzil has only just gone," added Mrs. Wharton; and, as she spoke, Effie entered the room.

She was indeed a bright being—the pet-name of "Firefly" suited her admirably—and she was as little spoiled by the adoration of her parents as was consistent with her belonging to human nature at all. Her beauty was of the fragile and elegant American kind, which is frequently combined with a surprising amount of intellectual and physical energy. With a face as finely chiselled and tinted as some Greek marble of the old divine days; a coronal of hair like plaited sunbeams; eyes as lustrous as Dolores's own, but of a changeable grey-blue colour, like her father's; a light, supple figure; and the hands and feet of a child as to size, but perfect in shape, Effie Wharton presented a strong contrast to Dolores, who regarded her with wondering interest.

The visit was more interesting than visits in general, on account of the circumstances which had led to it, but those special circumstances were not alluded to. It had

been agreed between Lilius, Rodney, and Colonel Courtland that, until some information had been obtained from Cuba, nothing was to be said to Dolores on the subject of her mother's family and her own rights.

The two girls parted, well pleased to know that they were to meet on the next day, and Captain Wharton and Rodney, finding that Miss Merivale and Dolores were going on to the Royal Academy, arranged to join them there.

"It was a long time before I could bear to see pictures," said Lilius to Rodney as he was taking her to her carriage; "but now I like to look at them." She said this simply, as if it were quite natural that he should understand what she felt. "I often wonder whether Hugh would have been a great artist had he lived. I believed him to be a great artist then, and I am very glad I did. It is better to overrate those we love while they are with us. Don't you think so?"

"Better for ourselves, perhaps," he answered slowly.

"And certainly for them. If they are not to escape whipping, we may leave it to the outer world to whip them; it will do it with a will. But we can't make them too happy, seeing how little we can do, and for how short a time."

"A gentle doctrine, Miss Merivale, though it has a root of bitterness," said Rodney, perceiving that her thoughts had passed from Hugh to Hugh's daughter, and wondering whether she was in anxiety or trouble about Dolores.

It was difficult to believe that there could be any cause, judging by the youthful beauty and content of the girl's face and mien as she bowed and smiled, touched her ponies with the whip, and drove off, the very picture of happiness, irradiated with the light of hope and expectation which is to the human countenance what sunshine is to a landscape.

But Lilius was anxious and troubled about Dolores, and now that the tumult of feeling, into which Rodney's coming had thrown her, had subsided—quickly, too, by the aid of his quiet friendliness and sympathy—she returned to the source of her trouble. This was Julian. It was impossible for her to avoid the conviction that there was something wrong with him, and that meant danger to the peace of Dolores. Was the time coming when Mrs. Courtland's words of warning would prove to be words of wisdom—when she

(Lilius) would have to stand aside and witness the grinding of the inexorable mill? Something was wrong. If she could have thought it was only a trouble of the kind with which she was tolerably familiar—one to be assuaged by recourse to her cheque-book—she would not have minded so much, for Lilius, although her administration of her own money matters was orderly and exact, never did rightly estimate the moral meaning of Julian's "extravagance". But she was sure that the something wrong was not of this kind. It would not be at all like him to spare his uncle or herself the knowledge of it in that case. Was it anything that might mar their hopes for Dolores?

Twice recently Julian had assigned excuses for not coming to The Quinces, which Lilius had accidentally discovered to be false. Although Lilius did not know that a man in love will violate binding obligations, incur serious risks with astounding heedlessness, neglect his own affairs, and those of other people for which he is accountable, with total unscrupulousness, go where he is not welcome, stay when he is wished away, make himself an intolerable nuisance, and be imperturbably aware that he is so regarded, rather than lose a chance of meeting the object of his passion; still her woman's wit told her that these excuses were a bad sign.

It was not Julian himself, but Colonel Courtland, who had proposed the visit to the Royal Academy, and he had promised to dine at The Quinces on the next day without any of the alacrity for which Lilius (as a spectator) would have looked in a lover. To be sure, she knew nothing about lovers except in poetry and romance, and the ideal which she had formed in her girlhood was perhaps an absurd one. Nevertheless, she was uneasy. That Dolores should be perfectly and always happy; that she should have her heart's desire, and never, never discover or dream that her heart might have desired anything loftier or better; that the destiny of Hugh and Ines should be reversed in that of their child; was the single aspiration, the concentrated longing of this woman's soul. If absolute unselfishness could have secured the fulfilment of that desire, as it purified and hallowed it, the future of Dolores ought to have been very sure.

There had been one experience in the life of Lilius to which she looked back when her trouble about Julian was im-

fortunate. She and Hugh had been brought together very much in the same way as Dolores and Julian, and when she grew into womanhood her stepfather had persuaded himself that she loved Hugh, but he was entirely mistaken. Was she now making a similar mistake about Julian? Thus did the instinct of a pure womanly nature shrink from the false without certainty of its falsehood, and strive towards the true unwitting of its truth.

Her own words to Rodney had set Lilius thinking again on this line, and she gave only mitigated attention to the remarks of Dolores upon the Whartons. Dolores had never seen so pretty a girl as Miss Wharton. Had Aunt Lilius? Yes; Aunt Lilius had, but she thought Miss Wharton very pretty and very charming. Dolores was sure Julian would be delighted with her, especially as she was so fond of music. Of course she played beautifully; she had promised that they should hear her to-morrow evening, and that would be such a treat for Julian. Dolores hoped Miss Wharton would be quite up to the mark, though, as Julian was very hard to please about women's playing. Finally, Dolores said :

"I used to be so sorry, Aunt Lilius, that you allowed me to give up music just because it was too much trouble, but I am glad now."

"Are you, my dear?" said Lilius, rousing herself. "Why?"

"Because my playing would never have been fit for Julian to listen to, and it is much better that I can't play at all."

"But you might have given pleasure to less fastidious ears, Dolores. After all, Julian is not the only person in the world, and—"

"There he is! There he is! Just going up the steps. He sees us! Is that gentleman with him? No; he has walked on. How delightful! We shall not have to wait for him under the clock."

She pulled up the ponies at the entrance to the Royal Academy, and flashed a radiant smile at Julian Courtland as he helped Miss Merivale to alight. Lilius had to give an order to the servant, and did not hear Dolores say : "Oh, Julian, how good of you to be so punctual!" Nor did she hear him answer in a tone which would have put all her doubts to flight :

"Was I not coming to meet you?"

Julian had been summoned that morning to a conference with his evil genius. He

found Mr. Wyndham in a surly and despotic mood. One of those ugly accidents which occasionally happen to persons in his line of business had occurred to him. He was not free from the weakness common to clever men; he never could believe that the other party to any bargain of his making might be more clever than he, and he had just sustained a serious loss by his chronic incredulity. This was the second within a week, and Mr. Wyndham, although Julian had had only two days' grace, felt it necessary to remind him again that he expected the fulfilment of his promise at very short date, under penalties.

There was not much novelty in the matter of their interview; the manner of it was, on Mr. Wyndham's part, a little more coolly implacable, and on Julian's more conciliating. The young man was, in fact, quite beaten, tired out, and in despair.

"I am going up there to dine to-morrow," he said, "and I will see how things look."

"What do you mean by that? If you haven't been dealing in empty boasts—an unsafe transaction with me—things have looked like the girl being ready to say 'Yes' ever since she's been grown up. Come here on Friday and tell me she has said 'Yes', and let us have no more nonsense about it."

Julian laughed insolently.

"I don't think that would quite do," he said, "even according to your unconventional notions. There's a dinner-party; some brand-new people from Boston, and a man named Rodney, who knew Mr. Rosslyn out in Cuba, and was an old friend of your wife, I believe—but I'm not clear on that point."

"Rodney—Rodney!" said Wyndham; "I don't remember the name. I don't think I ever heard of the man. What is he? Is he English or American?"

"How the deuce should I know? I'll tell you to-morrow."

Julian observed, with the secret pleasure that any annoyance to his evil genius was calculated to produce, that Mr. Wyndham was disturbed by this seemingly harmless communication. He tapped the table with his fingers, and repeated "Rodney, Rodney," under his breath, without heeding Julian's words.

"There's something in the note about 'Aunt Lilius being so glad to see someone who knew all about my mother', and that sort of thing," continued Julian, recovering

his memory when he saw a chance of making it unpleasant to Wyndham. "And now I must be going. I have to meet Miss Merivale and Miss Rosslyn at the Royal Academy at three o'clock."

He rose with an unsuccessful air of independence, and took up his hat.

"Wait a bit," said Wyndham; "I've something more to say. I don't like these new people and old friends coming about the place. You've had it all your own way up to the present, and you're either right about the girl's being ready to say 'yes', or you're wrong. But you may not go on having it all your own way; other people may have their views on Miss Merivale and her money, or Miss Rosslyn and hers. And if you should happen to be wrong about the young lady, the sooner we both know it the better. I feel pretty sure you're right, but I don't mean to put off making quite sure."

"And if I am wrong, what is to become of me?" asked Julian in a tone of despair.

He seemed to have sunk below everything except the motive of self-preservation, under the influence of this man.

"I have not the slightest idea," replied Mr. Wyndham with gay unconcern. "I have taken a fancy," he continued, "to have another look at the young lady who must settle that question for you; I saw her only imperfectly from the Lyceum stalls. So I shall go and have a look at the pictures, too."

"And run the risk of Miss Merivale's recognising you?"

"I'm not afraid that Miss Merivale will recognise me, and if she did, I'm not afraid of Miss Merivale," returned Mr. Wyndham airily.

Miss Merivale did her picture-seeing conscientiously, working through her catalogue herself, and for the most part in silence. She took very little notice of Julian and Dolores, and none at all of any of the other people about her. Mr. Wyndham, also a conscientious picture-seer and catalogue-consultor, had an undisturbed opportunity of observing her, sometimes standing close beside her, sometimes taking a seat and contemplating the group of three. Lilius was not likely to find much favour in the sight of Mr. Wyndham. The woman who had allowed herself to be put to ransom by him, to the amount of five thousand pounds, for a purely sentimental reason, and without the least attempt to beat him down in his demands, was to be

regarded from the intellectual point of view with contempt; while the grave and lofty refinement of Miss Merivale's aspect, the peculiar charm of a woman of highly cultivated mind, who is at the same time not a woman of the world, were things outside his ken and foreign to his taste.

"A regular dowdy old maid," was his summing up of Lilius; but Dolores found favour in his sight. "Where are the fellow's eyes," he said to himself, as he critically examined the face, figure, and dress of the unconscious girl; "where's his taste, where's his common-sense! The other's not to be named in the same day with little Dolly. Why, she's better-looking than ever her mother can have been, I should say; very like her, but not altogether like her either. What a smile, and what a laugh! That's some witticism of his, I suppose, that diverts her, little fool! She's a great deal too good for him, and if the money could be got at in any other way, I wouldn't—— who's this, I wonder?"

Rodney had joined Miss Merivale and her companions. Mr. Wyndham, consulting his catalogue with great assiduity, drew near enough to hear his name, as Lilius introduced Julian to him.

"Wharton, unfortunately, could not come," said Rodney. "His daughter——"

Here a stream of people making for the nearest door came between Mr. Wyndham and the speaker, and he did not catch the rest of the sentence, but he caught Dolores's merry look at Rodney, and he heard her silvery laugh.

Then the group of four divided into two and two, and went on into the adjoining gallery.

Mr. Wyndham closed his catalogue, resumed his seat, and pursued his cogitations, which recurred every now and then to Dolores, in such a strain as:

"Who could have thought she'd ever be so pretty! The sullen little obstinate brat who cried all day at that wretched place in Praed Street after that lout of a boy! Well, well; I should not wonder if she and I were very good friends some day."

With this latter reflection—boding no good to Julian Courtland—Mr. Wyndham rose and sauntered round a couple of galleries, not unwilling to have another look at Dolores. He was, however, rather disconcerted, when turning away from a picture which he had stopped to examine,

he perceived Dolores hard by, and looking at him fixedly in the puzzled but searching way which just precedes recognition. He bent down to inspect a superb landscape, hung close to the floor, and, of course, unintelligible; then after a moment or two glided through the crowd, and gained the safe and lonely haven of the architectural drawings.

"Julian," said Dolores, "I have just seen a man—he was here a moment ago, and he wears an eyeglass—that reminded me of someone—" She hesitated—she had never heard Willesden's name spoken in Lilius Merivale's house—"Of my poor mother's husband."

"Have you?" said Julian carelessly. "I should not have thought you remembered him well enough to trace a likeness in anybody to him. Here's the Tadema you wanted to see. Just look at the white marble!"

Mr. Wyndham avoided notice skilfully, but he took so much interest in these particular visitors to the Royal Academy that he remained as long as they did, keeping steady watch upon them all the time, and especially upon Lilius and Rodney. He followed them down the staircase at a discreet distance; then, while the ladies waited in the hall, and Rodney went to call up Miss Merivale's carriage, he placed himself by the side of Julian, who was claiming his cane from the proper custodian, and said in a tone as peremptory as it was low:

"Do it to-day. That man means mischief."

"Do you think I might volunteer to go home with you?" whispered Julian to Dolores, just as Rodney returned, and the carriage stopped the way.

"Of course you may. Aunt Lilius, here is Julian wanting to come home with us."

The girl's voice vibrated with her innocent gladness. Lilius nodded to Julian in smiling assent.

"Poor Mr. Rodney!" said Dolores, as the grey ponies trotted away down Piccadilly, "I think he would have liked to come too."

That was a delightful drive in the close of a beautiful summer afternoon. Julian was in high spirits—such high spirits, indeed, that Lilius asked herself whether she could be mistaken—whether her misgivings and her conviction that something was wrong with him were groundless. His manner to Dolores had something in it

which Lilius could not fail to observe, and which Dolores felt with trembling intensity—with a deep-seated happiness too great for words. She said little. Julian did two-thirds of the talking. Sometimes she affected to be quite engrossed with the ponies, but all the time she was radiant with content. After her first pleased and wondering perception of the change in Julian, Lilius took little notice of her companions. She was not tired, she assured them, and she had enjoyed the day thoroughly; but she liked to think over the pictures in silence.

When Julian had gone back to town that night, and Lilius was in her own room, sitting, as her custom was in the summer, at the open window, with no light but that of the stars, there came a gentle tap at the door, and Dolores entered the room, carrying a little lamp.

"What is it, dear?" asked Lilius, who had said good-night as usual to Dolores.

The girl set down the lamp, crossed the room, kneeled down by the side of Lilius, and clasped her arms round her waist.

"Well, my darling, what is it?"

"Aunt Lilius," said Dolores slowly, and with a strange solemnity, "I have always been happy. I have never had a trouble or a sorrow, that I can remember, since I came to you; but to-night I am the happiest person in all the world!"

"And why, Dolores?"

"Because Julian loves me, and has asked me to be his wife."

ART NEEDLEWORK.

NEEDLEWORK began to be practised very early on this our earth, and from the first it was, according to the workers' lights, what we call artistic. Even the cave-woman had her bone needles where-with she stitched together mantles of skins, as the Esquimaux do now, and on these skin garments they embroidered figures, even as their husbands engraved mammoths and reindeer on bits of bone and ivory. Look at a Hungarian shepherd's overcoat. He wears the wool inside, and on the outside are traced all kinds of quaint, interlacing spirals—quainter than what one sees on the collar of the fast-disappearing British smock-frock. Boadicea's fur-cloak had the same kind of ornament; so had the state robes of Red Indian chiefs. In Egypt, again, where one finds examples

of almost every kind of work, this leathern stitching was in high repute. At the Boulac museum, where the late Mariette Bey managed to get together a fair number of antiquities, one of the most interesting things is Queen Isi-em-Kebs's funeral tent. This is a patchwork of thousands of squares of gazelle-skin, coloured red and green, and stitched with a cord of twisted pink leather sewn on with pink thread. The flat top is worked with vultures, gazelles, lotuses, and rosettes, forming an hieroglyphical epitaph.

But the "textiles" in Egypt are much older than Solomon's time. The earliest known pyramids, those at Saccarah, have yielded their quota; and these, wonderful to say, are strangely like the mummy-wrappings in Peru. You can see samples of both in the British Museum, and you can read about the latter in Reiss's Necropolis of Ancon. Whence this startling likeness, seen also in certain Egyptian idols of the baser sort, the counterparts of which may be picked up amid Mexican ruins, or among the non-Aryans of Central India? Shall we, with Mr. Hyde Clarke, dream of a time when there was a "King of the West", whose dominion included all western Europe, and northern Africa, and also central America, and the islands of the Caribbean Sea, and who belonged to that Iberian or Basque race of which even in our isles we have some remnants? Who can tell? It may be that man, whether red, black, white, or yellow, behaves in much the same way under the same circumstances. The old Greeks, whose sepulchres Dr. Schliemann delights to open, covered the faces of their mighty dead with masks of beaten gold, and the Ashantees do the same; yet no one supposes any sort of kinship between Agamemnon and King Coffee.

Whatever may be the explanation, the fact is certain—old Peru had her embroidered mummy-wrappings like old Egypt; and if we begin to talk of transmission, why should not both have come from China? It seems pretty certain that embroidery, and perhaps other arts, went from Babylon to Egypt; the earliest Egyptians prized those "Babylonish garments" the possession of one of which cost the Jewish Achan so dear. And embroidery is of all arts the most transmissible. It can be folded in the tent-hangings, and taken a thousand miles on camel-back without getting any hurt. Hence, along with jewels, it made up the

chief wealth of nomads. From Mongol travelling-wains to Arab tents the art was spread, and Arabs then, as now, went down into Egypt; whilst, in the other direction, it is more than probable that prehistoric China had sent out voyagers across the Pacific.

Whether, however, we claim one common origin for embroidery, or deem that it arose in many places independently, it was certainly carried to great perfection among the earliest peoples of Asia. When Sisera's mother, in the Book of Judges, looks out of the window, anticipating her son's triumphant return, she can find nothing grander for his share of the booty than "a prey of divers colours of needlework on both sides". In David's day, the King's daughter of Egypt is brought to David's son "in raiment of needlework", described immediately before as "of wrought gold". A dangerous "vehicle" that, for the use of it has caused the destruction of countless square miles of embroidery on which a countless amount of time and labour had been lavished. Think of the thirty-six pounds of gold got by melting down, in 1540, the funeral-robcs of the Emperor Honorius's wife, who was buried A.D. 400! So, when Childeric's tomb at Tournai was opened in 1653, his robe of plaited gold strips was melted. How it fared with the gold brocade which in 1871 was found wrapped round Henry the Third's coffin I cannot tell. We are more art-loving now than they were two hundred years ago, but the "beaten work" of gold and silver so freely used in the Middle Ages to adorn dresses and hangings must have been even a greater temptation than the gold and silver thread which English needlewomen, beyond all others, had the art of "laying in" between their stitches. Very little of it has escaped the melting-pot, except where religion has interfered, as in the case of the English vestments which were sent abroad at the Reformation, and some of which have, since our Church Art revival, been coming back, while others, like the Westminster Abbey hangings at Valencia—are permanently lost to us.

For a different reason, wool is as little lasting as the precious metals; yet some of it has escaped the moth, and of the Egyptian wool embroidery in the British Museum the colours are as bright as when the work was done; you can identify the flowers with those still blooming in the fields by the Nile. Some of the finest pieces of wool-work have been found in

Crimean tombs. These (now in the St. Petersburg Museum) are dated about 300 B.C. In some of these the designs are painted on the material ; in a few they seem woven in, tapestry-fashion ; in most they are plainly needlework, making us think of the gorgeous "peplus" of Pallas Athene, embroidered every year by the Athenian maidens of highest rank, with that subject of which Greek art was never tired, the war of the gods and giants. In one of these tombs, that of "the seven brothers", at Kerch, a piece of silk has been found, not embroidered, but painted in transparent colours. From this tomb, also, was taken a bit of linen, which may be earlier than the flax-thread found in the Swiss lake-dwellings, but probably is many centuries later. These Swiss lake-people were what is called "Neolithic"—i.e., they had well-shaped stone tools, but had not learnt the use of metals ; yet the loom-combs found among their remains show that they knew all about spinning and weaving. Their wool-work, if they wrought any, has wholly perished. In Western Europe, the earliest woollen fabrics belong to the bronze age ; and of these some, among them the garment found in a Yorkshire barrow, at Rylston, are (says Dr. Rock) not woven, but plaited.

From sculptures and mosaics we can form a better idea of embroidery as it was than from the poor, decaying fragments taken out of tombs. This is notably the case with the Babylonian embroideries. None of them remain, but the wonderful richness of them is shown in the bas-reliefs. Look at Assurbanipal fighting lions ; get a bright day, for he stands in the British Museum in rather a dark place ; you see his corslet and helmet and horse-trappings—solid masses of gold wire drawn through and through, and then hammered up till they looked like jeweller's work. So in the Ravenna mosaic the Empress Theodora and her ladies are dressed—some in Indian shawl stuffs, some in embroidery after the style of Athene's peplus. It is the same with our own tombs : the recumbent figure is clad just as the living man used to be. Nay, King John at Worcester was buried in a rich red silk with gold-embroidered bordering, just like his painted effigy. This was proved when they opened his tomb in 1797. Much older and much richer was the beautiful embroidery taken in 1827 from St. Cuthbert's tomb. In Dr. Raine's St. Cuthbert it is described as "of woven gold with spaces left

vacant for needlework. The figures on rainbow-coloured clouds give it the effect of a ninth-century illumination." Aelfled, Queen of Edward the Elder, had this stole and maniple embroidered for Frithestan, Bishop of Winchester. His name and hers are on the end of the stole. When King, and Queen, and Bishop were all dead, Athelstan, making a "progress" northward, visited St. Cuthbert's shrine at Chester-le-Street, and gave these along with other precious vestments. It is a good thing they were buried, or they might have shared the fate of the Saint's banner of crimson velvet, delicately wrought with flowers in green and gold, and "most artificially worked and fringed with little silver bells in the fringe, which, having in the centre the corporax used by the Saint in celebrating mass, used to be carried into battle. But Dame Whittingham, the dean's wife (about 1730), did most injuriously destroy the same in her fire." Another instance of embroidery reproduced in stone is the Black Prince's surcoat. The velvet still hanging over the tomb shows the very same stitches and ornaments which are reproduced in the recumbent effigy.

I spoke of embroidery as a special art for dwellers in tents. Long after the nomad stage was past it was used to ornament tents ; indeed some of its greatest triumphs were wrought for tent-decoration. Antar's tent, under whose embroidered shade five thousand horsemen could find room to skirmish, belongs to romance. But Alexander's tent, erected at his namesake city, and the still grander one, with fifty golden pillars and a roof of woven gold, and curtains embroidered with figures in gold and colours, which he had made for his wedding-feast, are historical. So is the yet richer tent erected at Alexandria by Ptolemy Philadelphus. Of this the pillars represented alternately golden palm-trees and golden vines, of which the grapes were amethysts, while the hangings that divided it into rooms were embroidered with portraits of Kings and heroes. Sir John Chardin says : "The Khan of Persia caused a tent to be made resplendent with embroideries. It cost two millions. They called it the house of gold." Nadir Shah's tent—about 1700—in which was placed the famous peacock-throne, was of scarlet cloth lined with violet satin embroidered with gold and precious stones. Then there was that palace on the Tigris, built for Caliph Moctader, which Abulfeda describes as

adorned with thirty-eight thousand pieces of tapestry, of which twelve thousand were of silk worked in gold; and then again were the hangings of Chosroes's palace, representing all the flowers of spring, and wrought in gold and jewels and coloured silks. The impassive Gibbon goes into raptures as he describes them; and Chosroes entreated the Caliph Omar, his conqueror, to keep them uninjured; the destruction of such a glorious work would grieve him as much as his own downfall. But it was then early days with Mahometanism (A.D. 651); Caliphs had not yet grown luxurious; and Omar cut these grand tapestries into little bits to make praying-carpets for his officers.

War is always the enemy of culture. A few years ago the markets of Western Europe were flooded with Turkish embroideries, heirlooms stolen from the dying, or sold for a piece of bread, amid the accumulated horrors of that war which was aggravated by the cry of "Bulgarian atrocities". And peace, too, has had its waste. At a very grand funeral the pyre was often hung with tapestries and embroideries which were burned along with the body. Over his friend Hephaestion, Alexander raised a wooden palace two hundred and fifty feet high. Each of its many storeys was hung with embroidered curtains; and, aloft, in huge hollow figures of sirens, were singers who chanted the funeral-dirge. All was burnt; let us hope that the singers had good notice and were able to escape.

Of course embroidery has always been a favoured servant of religion. The Jewish tabernacle had its veils enriched with needlework; the veil which Herod hung before his "beautiful gate" was Babylonian work representing the signs of the Zodiac—the earth, and sun, and all the planets. The same was the case with heathen temples. The Bible tells how, at Jerusalem, "women wove hangings for the grove" (the graven image).

Greek temples, solid though they were, were often burnt, thanks to their embroidered hangings. The Roman style, with its round arches and great wall-spaces, specially lent itself to this sort of decoration; with the pointed arches and bigger windows of the Gothic, it gradually gave place to stained glass. But, if hangings were less used in the later mediæval churches, embroidery in other ways got more and more in vogue. Read the catalogue, made by Edward the Sixth's commissioners, of the ornaments even in the smallest parish

churches. Such a wealth of copes and altar-cloths; and these not church property, but most of them belonging to guilds (of which almost every parish had two or three), and used on their festivals, as the insignia of the Oddfellows are nowadays. People then gave liberally to their church and got something in return. Fancy what a grand function must have been at Lincoln, where the commissioners found six hundred embroidered vestments! England was specially rich in this kind of work. Matthew Paris tells us that when Innocent the Third saw some of our splendid vestments, he cried: "Surely England is a well inexhaustible; and where there is such abundance, from thence much may be drawn out." At the Reformation all this was destroyed or dispersed. A few have come back, notably the Stonyhurst cope, which was Henry the Seventh's, and is embroidered with Tudor roses—a poor, mean thing compared with our thirteenth century cope at St. John Lateran, and Thomas à Becket's vestments, sold away to the cathedral of Sens; and the Syon cope, carried, when Elizabeth became Queen, by the nuns of Sion House, through Flanders and France, till they and it found a resting-place in Lisbon. Some sixty years ago it came back to England, and is now in South Kensington.

A few palls—that of Dunstable, the Vintners, and the Fishmongers, and some in the little Norwich churches—have always remained to us; but most of our treasures were lost in that ignobly selfish scuffle for wealth which marked our change of religion. Other nations managed better. The North Germans became much more thoroughly Protestant than we did; but they did not destroy or make away with their works of art. They confiscated the endowments, but respected the art-treasures. Our reforming gentry (for the Reformation with us was mainly a political movement for enriching the higher classes) kept the endowments—family livings were too good to be given up for conscience-sake—and gave the painted glass to be hammered in pieces; and the statues to be broken down; and the broidery of copes, and stoles, and altar-cloths to be sold or pulled to pieces for the sake of the gold thread; and the illuminated missals to be cut in pieces to fledge arrows with. We were well punished for such vandalism, and that soon. Of old, needlework had been the glory of the land, a tradition since Anglo-Saxon days, if not since the time of

Empress Helena, a Welsh princess, wife of Emperor Constans, whose embroidery Muratori, in the seventeenth century, described as still preserved at Vercelli. Bock, in his *Liturgische Gewänder*, says it is still there; if so, it is nearly one thousand five hundred years old.

It was a pity the art should die out. The series of workers had been so long kept up unbroken. In *Domesday*, we read of Alive the maiden getting from Godric, Sheriff of Buckingham, for her life half a hide of land "if she might teach his daughters to make orphreys"—aurophrygia, the gold embroidery on church vestments.

In Mrs. Lawrence's *Woman in England* there is a great deal about our English work. It even survived the Wars of the Roses; and, in the ups and downs of that sad time, noble ladies, reduced to penury, were glad to earn a living by their needle. The religious houses had always been famous for needlework; even the monks occasionally plied the needle. Gifford, writing to Cromwell of the suppression of a monastery at Wools-thorpe, Lincolnshire, says: "There is not one religious person there but what can and doth use either embrotheryng, wryting bookees with a fayre hand, making garments, karvyng," etc. With the change in religion the embroiderer, like the illuminator, was starved out. It is astonishing how soon the art died out. Queen Catherine had been a notable needlewoman, solacing her loneliness by practising the art she had learnt from her mother, "who always made her husband's shirts". Mary, Spanish in all her tastes, spent her weary vigils for Philip, who never came, in working "Spanish stitch, black and gold". There is a good deal of Elizabeth's handicraft still extant; but the taste in her day was getting depraved. Elizabethan needlework is perfect in workmanship, but wholly wanting in naturalness and beauty. In the next reign even the workmanship deteriorated. Nothing shows more clearly how the good old English traditions had died out than the Mompesson business. We used to be famous for our gold thread, it was so much purer than the Spanish or Italian; but when Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, got the monopoly and employed the Frenchmen Mompesson and Michael to get his thread made, it was soon so scandalously debased as to corrode the workmen's hands, and even the flesh of the wearers. The Villiers-Mompesson patent empowered the monopo-

lists to punish anyone whom they found making a better or cheaper article; for they made the public pay exorbitantly for this scandalous stuff.

Thus it was that, in James's day, needle-work degenerated into simple crewel, a style popular since the old Assyrian times. And here, where we might have been helped by hints and patterns from India, we were cut off by that foolish legislation which even then was beginning to destroy the Indian manufactures, in the supposed interest of the British workman. The East India Company was founded in Elizabeth's reign; and, though at first other Indian manufactures were admitted, the Broiderers—whom Elizabeth had just formed into a Company—had sufficient influence to keep out Indian embroidery from the very first.

Coarseness of execution went hand-in-hand with poverty of design in the Jacobean and Caroline needlework. James and Anne of Denmark figure as Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, with Windsor Castle in the background. Such clumsy allegorical work lets us down by a rapid descent to the heavy "German Louis Quatorze work" of the Georges. Early in the eighteenth century it was found that, despite prohibition, Indian patterns were coming in, and were being copied in tambour-work. A new statute, therefore, forbidding the importation from India of any wrought material, was passed by the influence of the Broiderers, and our chance of assimilating Indian taste was lost for a century and a half. English worsted-work spent itself in fruitless efforts to imitate oil-paintings. Our mothers remember Miss Linwood's needle-pictures, which were so long on show in Leicester Square. These are not legitimate embroidery; they are attempts, some very clever, but mostly abortive, to do something which the material forbids. Those who could not work like Miss Linwood or Mrs. Pawsey could make life a burden with hideous Berlin-work; which, by a strange irony of fate, our missionaries' wives are teaching to little Hindoo girls, and thereby stamping out their own immemorial and really beautiful designs.

Well, to sum up, needlework is real art, and its triumphs are connected with all the grandest events of man's history. The moral is, that those who practise such an art should be able to live by it. Irish girls working their eyes out at lace which brings wealth to the grater, to them

only a starvation pittance ; English girls embroidering children's coats at such fabulously small prices the dozen that one thinks *The Song of the Shirt* was written in vain—these things ought not to be. The workers in such an old and honourable craft ought to be able to live by it ; and, while one is glad to hear of the prosperity of "the Royal School of Art Needlework", one also hopes that Mrs. Heckford and those who, like her, are doing something for the East London needlewomen, will have their share of success.

OLD ACTON.

OF the great highways that lead from London with a definite purpose towards the provinces, hardly any one takes such an unpretending start as the Uxbridge Road. There is nothing, indeed, so very imposing about Uxbridge that the way thereto should attract particular attention, but it must be remembered that the highway does not come to an abrupt ending at Uxbridge, as one might perhaps infer from its designation, but continues on to Oxford, to Worcester, and the western midlands generally. The road, indeed, properly begins with Oxford Street, which has preserved its more dignified title, but seems to forget its destination altogether among the fashionable and wealthy denizens of Bayswater, and then, after an intermediate existence as Notting Hill High Street, awakes to a life with a definite purpose by Shepherd's Bush, and announces itself with humble aspirations as the road to Uxbridge. Originally, perhaps, the road was a cattle-track, used by drovers from Wales and the marshes, with its Ox-ford and its Ox-bridge on the way, a miry track, we may be sure, looking at the stiff clay on either hand, and scenting the smell of brickfields on the breeze. Indeed, on wintry days there is a suspicion of mud about the Uxbridge Road even now ; and with the bare building fields and brick-fields on either hand, with here a row of houses, and there a forlorn hedgerow that has preserved of its once rural surroundings only a deep and muddy ditch, with troughs trickling muddy water into muddier clay-pits, and a general slabby and clayey feeling everywhere—with all this, accompanied as often happens by a genial suburban fog, there is no great prospect offered of a pleasant ramble.

But then there is a tramway that bridges

over this strip of debateable land, which halts half-way between town and country, and the tramcar stops at the foot of Acton Hill, where the road assumes a pleasant, rural aspect. Not long ago the great feature of the road, as it wound up the hill, was a noble old brick wall—solid, massive, with long buttresses, containing bricks enough to build a modern street, and toned down with age to a rich and mellow hue, with patches of moss and lichen here and there, and rough, luxuriant growths of wild creepers and climbers topping its crumbling coping. Everything spoke of rigid quiet and seclusion behind this great brick barrier, of the uninterrupted quiet and seclusion of a couple of centuries at least. You might catch a glimpse from a distant hill of the tops of high trees, and perhaps of a gable or chimney-shaft, but in every other way within its walled enclosure the house was as far removed from all the stir and life outside as if it stood in the depths of some forest wild.

And then, one day, not long ago, a visit to the spot revealed a sudden transformation. The great wall had been levelled almost to its foundations, and the zealously secluded grounds were open to the public gaze—deep grass, tall elms, tangled shrubberies, the massive limbs of oaks, overgrown lawns and neglected parterres, while here and there, as if still shrinking from observation, peered a turret, gable, or chimney-shaft of the old house. Big notice-boards announced the sale of the site for building-lots, while the old iron gates which had long almost rusted on their hinges were now thrown wide open.

The old house is known as Berrymead Priory, but how it got the name it is difficult to say. No record has come down to us of any religious house having been founded on the site. And yet local tradition will have it that once upon a time there were monks at Berrymead. A chequered history would the old house have to show if its annals could be completely written. But no one has as yet dived very deeply into the antiquities of Acton, and we can only catch a glimpse of the life-history of the place at one point or another, and never very clearly.

It is likely enough that, from its secluded position and proximity to London, the place may have been used as a seminary or other institution for priests of the old faith between the Reformation and the reign of Charles the Second ; but at the

latter period the house was the residence of William Saville, Marquis of Halifax. The Marquis died at the house in the beginning of the eighteenth century. It seems an appropriate place to die at, with a touch of sombre melancholy about the spot that no gilding can brighten—and there is plenty of gilding—and no sunshine altogether dispel, although the sun shines brightly enough at times.

Some time after this we find the house inhabited by the first Duke of Kingston, when King George the Second was a frequent visitor, and, after that, the Duke of Newcastle—not of the old Cavendish, but of the later Clinton stock—occupied the place, having for the companion of his solitude—so says the tradition of the place—no other than the Nancy Dawson of ballad fame. The Duke made a good many alterations, it is said, and built out the music-room and the billiard-room; but the final conversion of the place into a bastard kind of Gothic, is due to one Colonel Clutton, who was a subsequent owner. Then local tradition is at work again, and connects Lord Byron with the place; but here tradition is probably wrong, and has confounded the poet with a later peer. But if the genius loci is to be believed, Sir Edward Lytton, as he then was, occupied the house for some time, and in the dining-room occurred the final quarrel with Rosina, Lady Lytton, which led to a lifelong separation. Alas! they both had the sensitive organisation of literary artists; both were hungry for appreciation; and how could the one appreciate the other? And then a wife with a keen insight into character, and a fine sarcastic touch, such as Lady Lytton's novels reveal—how could a man so vulnerable be expected to get on with her ladyship?

The house itself seems sympathetic with the Lytton legend—recalling the days when great nobles had their houses in Clerkenwell, or in Hackney, or in localities as little fashionable at the present day; a touch of the old baronial feeling—one hardly knows whether real or sham—a little bit of mystery in passages that lead to nothing—panels that give a hollow sound, winding stairs that begin at my Lord's chamber and come out nobody knows where, old vaulted cellars that may have been prison-cells, with a possible monk bricked up behind the port wine bin; and then a music-room that Polly Peachum may have sang in, and still the melancholy, sombre shadow over all.

And then for a little Bohemian glitter command us to the episode of Lola Montes, for whom the old house was made to glow with a kind of Oriental splendour in gilding and plate-glass. A strange career for that dauntless Scotch lassie, with the hot blood of her Creole mother dancing too fiercely in her veins! A wild story indeed it is—how she captivated old King Ludwig, and ruled Bavaria, and had her foot upon Grand Duchesses and Serene Highnesses, but was finally vanquished by students and sans culottes in a revolution in which Lola would have gladly taken the lead, if she had been permitted. Then she came to England with the éclat of her exploits upon her, drove in Hyde Park, and captivated a young Guardsman. Lola was not wanting in a kind of magnanimity. She made her admirer take three months to consider the matter; then she married him, and they went to live at Berrymead. Lola was then thirty years old, in the full power of her undoubted fascinations—not beautiful exactly, but with wonderful eyes and magnificent hair. But her domestic happiness was of short duration, for certain unfriendly relations of her husband had discovered that she had another husband alive, a certain Captain James, whom she had married at sixteen, and might well have hoped to be finally rid of. But, threatened with a prosecution for bigamy, Lola and her de facto husband took refuge in Spain, where she gave birth, it is said, to two fine children. But her temper was of the stormiest, and finally she wearied out her husband's patience. He left her, and took proceedings to annul his marriage as bigamous. And then Berrymead was once more inhabited, but not for long, for its owner soon fell into a kind of consumption, and died. As for Lola, after a strange, adventurous career in California and South America, she died in poverty and misery in New York, about five-and-twenty years ago.

Most strange are the popular legends about the old house. One might be incredulous of the existence of such legends in a London suburb, but Acton has somehow retained a good deal of local individuality. It might not be prudent, perhaps, to dwell upon ghosts, but there can be no harm in saying that tradition has it there is a large treasure buried somewhere in the grounds. For the rest, there is a fine oak-tree, at least four hundred years old, with a sturdy limb at a

convenient height from the ground, which did duty for a gallows in the days of the wicked old monks—adopting the popular view of their character—although if there ever were monks about the place, they were doubtless a very harmless, inoffensive kind of people.

Among the curious vicissitudes of the place it may be mentioned, by the way, that for some years in the present century it was occupied as a nunnery; and there was a pool at the bottom of the garden, with swans and fountains, now nearly all filled up with builders' rubbish. And, indeed, the all-devouring builder is already close upon the skirts of the pleasure-grounds. A huge board-school looks down upon a once secluded lawn; a public hall has been reared just beyond the fish-pond; the house itself has been secured for a club; and rows of villas will before long spring up all round.

As we pass through the iron gate, and reach the highway once more, we may notice farther up on the opposite side, in the recess of another very high and solid brick-wall, an ancient conduit, almost the last surviving example of a public benefit once so frequent. This is Thorneys's Conduit, endowed in 1612 with a rent-charge of twenty shillings per annum; but the water is now condemned as unwholesome, and the pipe is under lock and key, and where the twenty shillings go nobody knows.

But we have not yet exhausted the associations of Acton. At the top of the hill, just before entering the High Street, we turn along Horn Lane, and there, half-way down, we come upon more high brick-walls, though not so massive or so ancient as the fallen wall of Berrymead, and peering over this wall is a solid, substantial, square, red-brick mansion, known as Derwentwater House, once the town residence of the Ratcliffes, and of that unfortunate member of the family, James, Earl of Derwentwater, who was beheaded for his share in the luckless Jacobite rising of 1715. Here, it is said, the body of the unhappy Earl rested for a night after the execution, and the great gates were thrown open for the last time as the hearse, with its six black horses, drove away on the long, dismal journey to the north. And here, again, local tradition has been busy. There is a grass-plot in the garden, adorned with an obelisk of stone, and beneath this is buried, so says the popular voice, the decapitated Earl. But here tradition can be shown to

be clearly in the wrong. The remains of the Earl lay for many years in the deserted chapel of Dilston Hall, and have, within late years, been removed to Sussex, to the private burying-place of the family who now represent the Ratcliffes. But it is just possible there may be some ground for the tradition, after all. There was a brother Charles who, after the death of his nephew, the titular earl, assumed the title of Earl of Derwentwater, and he, who had been condemned to death in 1715, but had managed to escape, was captured, in 1745, on his way to join the Young Pretender, and was condemned and executed on the former attainder. It is just possible that he may have found a grave within the walls of the family domain.

Opposite the walls of Derwentwater House is another old-fashioned house, with the air of a country manor about it, now known as The College, which looks as if it had a history, with its ivy-covered walls and low, irregular roof; and alongside this is a kind of grassy hollow, known as The Steyne, about which congregate the cottages of the laundry-people. Acton has taken rank as a laundry town, and, on Saturdays, the roads about are thronged with light carts carrying home to customers their weekly tale of clean linen, while, on Mondays, there is the same procession of vehicles loaded with soiled raiment. Tuesdays are devoted to washing and wringing. On Wednesdays and Thursdays innumerable clothes-lines are hung out, and the air is whitened with fluttering garments. Then there is Friday for ironing and mangling, and then the whole round begins again as before.

The High Street of Acton is pleasant enough—a quaint, county-town kind of high-street, with its raised causeway on one side, a sort of parade or promenade, flanked by the country shops, the saddler, the confectioner, the shoemaker, and the rest, while here and there an old-fashioned bow-window projects over the scene, full of blooming flowers, and festooned with neat white curtains. There is a feeling that here is really a public walk, like, at a long interval, the Pantiles of Tunbridge Wells; you can almost hear the rustle of the garments, the silks, and brocades, and paduasofs of other days; you feel the ceremonious politeness of the three-cornered hats, the profound curtsseys of the hoops and farthingales. And thus you feel a human interest in the fact that Acton really was a watering-place at one time, with its wells

upon the common, its pump-house, and its Assembly Rooms, where people danced, and flirted, and felt that here was a giddy maze of pleasure and delight. These things are all gone now ; the wells, indeed, may be running still in somebody's back-garden, but even the memory of the Assembly Rooms is lost, although there is a modern hall which answers the same purpose, and where people, no doubt, manage to find the same interest as in former days.

And here we take another turn which brings us to the railway-station of the period, with a train for the Mansion House, or, perhaps, for New Cross, just due, and, rattling over the familiar route, the memories of Old Acton grow fainter and more indistinct.

UNDER THE CHESTNUTS.

We stood beneath the chestnuts beside the river-bank,
So still the swallows swooped and poised, and from
the streamlet drank;
The sun beyond the purple moors, was setting in
the west,
With the clouds like vassals round him, in gold and
crimson drest.
You said the words that made life full of hope and
joy to me,
And at our feet Ure shone and gleamed, on rushing
to the sea.

I stood beneath the chestnuts, beside the river-bank,
And from the robin's vesper-song, as if it hurt me,
shrank ;
The sun beyond the purple moors was setting in
the west ;
I thought, so set my happiness, with all that life
loves best.
And no one whispered "Be of cheer," no hand held
help to me,
And at my feet Ure shone and gleamed, on rushing
to the sea.

Ah, still beneath the chestnuts, beside the river
bank,
Will other glad young lovers, the golden evening
thank ;
The sun beyond the purple moors sink glorious to
his rest,
And hear the pleading promise made, the trusting
love confessed ;
And other maidens meet the fate, that wrecked my
life and me,
While all the while Ure shines and gleams, and
rushes to the sea.

DUELING, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

WHEN we read in the newspapers—as we may have done lately—that two gentlemen in high life have met in hostile encounter with no more deadly weapons than their fists, we can hardly fail to recall that in a not very remote past such a fracas would inevitably have been followed by a meeting of a more serious character—that a duel

with pistols or swords would certainly have followed the undecided boxing-match. Happily in our days quarrels, which in times past were left to the arbitrament of combat, are now adjusted in less heroic or romantic fashion. On a prossic judge, and twelve commonplace and matter-of-fact jurymen, as a rule, devolves the duty of awarding "satisfaction" to the party aggrieved.

It cannot be denied that, even in the days when it was in vogue, the custom of duelling was more honoured in the breach than in the observance. At best it was but the pursuit of vengeance under difficulties—with the superadded drawback that the victor might possibly be hanged. Even as a means of exacting vengeance for injury inflicted, it can hardly be said to be quite effective. For instance, let us suppose that it is still in fashion, and that I have been insulted and consider myself injured by an adversary. I demand satisfaction—that is to say, I invite him to meet me on equal terms, armed with the same weapons. If I succeed in killing, or nearly killing him, I shall have obtained satisfaction at the subsequent risk of being indicted for murder or manslaughter, and no doubt afterwards grieve greatly for his fate ; but if I get killed, or badly wounded, where does my satisfaction come in ?

In what we moderns are pleased to regard as the barbarous ages, duelling had a more intelligible *raison d'être* ; it was a particularly rough, though not very ready way, of invoking poetical justice on wrong-doers and designers of evil. By the judicial combat, or "wager of battle", as is well known, an accused person was permitted to challenge his accuser to single combat, and did victory declare for him, his innocence was held to have been incontestably established. This test, however, can hardly be considered as conclusive, since the physically weaker party must of necessity have been unfairly handicapped. Providence is said by an eminent modern authority to be always on the side of big battalions, and by a parity of reasoning may also be supposed to favour the party with the more formidable physique, so that the ordeal of combat as deciding the guilt or innocence of an accused person can hardly be considered convincing in its results.

Moreover, those olden-time duellists took exceeding pains to protect their persons. They were fearfully and wonderfully appareled, begirt with impenetrable

steel, so that the armourer shared with the proverbial Providence responsibility for the issue.

The precautions against facile blood-letting, and the pomp and circumstance attending the mediæval duel, are strikingly set forth in contemporary records of the preparations for a historic combat—which, however, did not come off—between the Duke of Hereford and the Duke of Norfolk, in September, 1398. The former was said to have basely betrayed a private conversation, in which he alleged that the latter had dropped several expressions of a treasonable nature. The accusation was denied, and according to the usage of the times the Duke of Norfolk demanded the privilege of acquitting himself by single combat. Each of the Dukes, according to the laws of chivalry, flung down his glove, which were both taken before the King and sealed, in order to prevent any future denial of the challenge.

The King appointed Coventry as the place of combat, and caused a splendid theatre to be erected on Gosford Green, wherein the fight was to come off. Froissart maintains that neither of the rival Dukes would trust native artificers to supply their armour. One imported four armourers from Lombardy, and the other, certain equally cunning craftsmen from Germany. When the belligerents were armed for the encounter, it is said they looked very imposing, but, seeing that they wore heavy and brightly polished steel armour, that was, moreover, "elegantly inlaid" with gold and silver, however striking they were in appearance, they must have felt in person particularly uncomfortable—boxed-up like this in envelopes of heavy metal, they could hardly have been at ease, particularly as the weather is said to have been very hot. Besides, they both relied on the intrinsic strength of their armour apart from supernatural influences, for they were required to clear themselves, on oath, from having any commerce with incantations, or of rendering their armour or their bodies invulnerable by any charm—agencies that were had recourse to on similar occasions by less illustrious people.

"The Duke of Hereford," says that veracious chronicler Hollinshed, "armed him in his tent, that was set up neere to the lists, and the Duke of Norfolk put on his armour between the gate and the barrier of the town, in a beautiful house, having a fair perclois of wood towards the gate, that

none might see what was doing within his house. The Duke of Aumarle, that daie being high Constable of England, and the Duke of Surrie, Marshal, placed themselves betwixt them, well armed and appointed, and when they saw their time, they first entered into the lists with a great company of men appalled in silke sandals, embroidered with silver, both richlie and curioslie, everie man having a tipped staff to keep the field in order. About the hour of prime came to the barriers of the lists the Duke of Hereford, mounted on a white courser, barded with green and blew velvet, embroidered sumptuously with swans and antelopes of goldsmith's worke, armed at all points."

All being ready, the first to appear was "Henrie of Lancaster, Duke of Hereford," who said in a loud voice: "I am come hitheir to do mine indevor against Thomas Mowbraie, Duke of Norfolk, as a traitor, untrue to God, the King, his realme, and me." And then "incontinentlie he sware upon the holie evangelists that his quarrel was true and just, and upon that point he required to enter the lists. Then he put up his sword, which before he held naked in his hand, and pulling down his visor made a crosse on his horse, and with speare in hand entered the lists, and then descended from his horse, set him down in a chair of green velvet, and there repos'd himself, abiding the coming of his adversarie." Soon after there entered King Richard, "with great triumph, accompanied by all the peeres of the realme," and, moreover, attended by above two thousand men in armour, "least some frai or tumult might arise amongst his nobles, by quarrelling or partaking." When the King had taken his seat, a herald cried: "Behold here, Henrie of Lancaster, Duke of Hereford, appellant, which is entered into the lists roiall to do his devoir against Thomas Mowbraie, Duke of Norfolk, defendant, upon pain to be found false and recant."

Then came the Duke of Norfolk on horseback, "his horse being barded with crimson velvet, embroidered richly with lions of silver and mulberie trees, and when he made his oath before the Constable and Marshal that his quarrel was just and true," he too alighted, and sat down on his chair, that was of crimson velvet. The herald then gave the word to begin. The combatants mounted, and all was ready for the dread encounter, when—very provokingly for the reader—the King commanded them to resume their seats, where they remained

for two long hours while his majesty was in consultation with his advisers. The upshot of the whole portentous affair was that the combat did not take place, and the King decreed the banishment of both the intending combatants.

The same pomp of preparation and arrangement are noted in the accounts of other famous single encounters of this period. One of the most remarkable was the duel fought a century and a half later, in the park of St. Germain en Laye, between Francis de Vivonne, Lord of Chateigneraye, and Guy de Chabot, Lord of Jarnac, in the presence of King Henry the Second and his court. The former being dangerously wounded in the thigh was disabled, and his life, according to the rules of the combat, became forfeited to the victor, who generously waived his right, and desired the King to accept at his hands the life of the foe he had vanquished, to which request his majesty was graciously pleased to assent. Chateigneraye, however, took his defeat so much to heart that he died three days afterwards. He was confident of victory; so much so, that he had prepared a magnificent entertainment for his friends on the day of the combat. As the event proved, however, he set too much store on his own dexterity, and strangely undervalued the skill of his adversary. So strikingly was this made manifest, that the coup De Jarnac thenceforward became a household word—used to denote an unexpected manœuvre reserved by an enemy. The King greatly regretted the loss of Chateigneraye, to whom he was much attached, and he prohibited future encounters of that kind under severe penalties.

Nearly a century later another King of France took still more vigorous action against duelling; he caused two nobles who had fought, despite his prohibition, to be put to death. In 1626, the Count de Boutteville, father of the famous Marshal de Luxembourg, killed the Count of Thorigny in a private duel, and soon afterwards, having taken part as principal in another encounter in which his second killed the second of his adversary, fled to Flanders, fearing arrest. Thither he was pursued by the Marquis de Beuvron, who had vowed to revenge the death of his friend Thorigny. By the intervention of the Archduchess, however, a temporary reconciliation was effected between the two gentlemen. The truce of seeming friendship did not last long; Beuvron soon recanted his altered resolve, and

wrote insulting letters to De Boutteville, who had retired to Nancy, re-challenging him to the combat in Paris. Des Chappelles, a notorious duellist, who had espoused Beuvron's quarrel, also wrote to him with the view of compelling him to fight.

" You make a great deal of noise, sir," he said, " giving out everywhere that you intend to fight, but this I will never believe until I see you in action."

De Boutteville, though not anxious for the encounter, could not resist such incitements. He repaired to Paris, and sent word to Beuvron that he was ready to give him satisfaction. When the preliminary arrangements for the meeting were made, it was found that the duel had resolved itself into a combat of three on each side. After each had been examined by a gentleman to see that they had no private armour the fray began. In addition to the two principals, Boutteville and Beuvron, their friends Des Chappelles and La Berthe, Bussy d'Amboise and Buquet, took part in the encounter, which had a curious termination, that is thus described: "Boutteville and Beuvron rushing forward and seizing one another by the collar, threw their swords on the ground, and held their poignards elevated without striking. At length Boutteville proposed to put an end to the combat, and they reciprocally begged their lives from one another. Bussy d'Amboise, however, was not so fortunate; Des Chappelles gave him a mortal wound in the breast; and La Berthe was also dangerously wounded by the friend of Beuvron."

This affray was witnessed by thousands of spectators, and greatly angered King Louis the Thirteenth, who at once ordered the arrest of the surviving combatants. All, however, escaped except Boutteville and Des Chappelles, who were imprisoned in the Bastille, afterwards brought to trial, and, in spite of the intercession of influential friends, both beheaded on the 12th of June, 1627. They died quite resigned to their fate, each having previously petitioned that the other might be pardoned.

" I must beg two things of you," said Des Chappelles to his judges. " The first is that justice may be satisfied in my person; and the second that you should show mercy to my friend;" and De Boutteville spoke to the same effect, pleading not that his own life, but that of Des Chappelles might be spared.

In the latter part of the last, and beginning of the present, century it was, however, that duelling most generally prevailed in most Continental countries, as well as in Great Britain and Ireland. In France, at the close of the last century, according to an eminent authority, "there was scarcely a man worth looking on who had not killed his man," and in Great Britain about the same time a gentleman's education was held to be hardly perfect until he had "smelt powder". Legislators, lawyers, judges even, and members of other learned professions, gentry and estates persons of every degree, were so jealous of their honour, and of the preservation of the "tone" of high society, that they engaged in deadly conflict on the smallest provocation. One indeed is puzzled to recall the names of more than a few of the many eminent persons of the period who are recorded as having fought duels; from "the minister down to the clerk of the crown", all public and prominent men were duellists—indeed, to doubt the morality or deny the necessity of the duel in these "brave days of old", would have been thought excessively "bad form." That it was illegal rather added to its attractiveness, and increased the zest with which it was had recourse to as the occasion seemed to require. Moreover, but few offenders were ever brought to justice, and most of them escaped punishment.

But the Emerald Isle has been pre-eminently the land where duelling flourished in the immediate past. Most of the English readers of Lever's and Lover's earlier Irish novels, no doubt, consider that the many duels arising from trivial causes on which the plots of most of them hinge, are either gross exaggerations of possible occurrences, or pure inventions of the lively fancy of their authors; but, if anything, they are but faint reflections of actual facts. Duelling, without doubt, was universal in Ireland at the commencement of this century. No gentleman was held to be qualified for admission to polite society until he had encountered, if not killed, his man. No barrister could go circuit until he made a reputation in this way, and scarcely an assize passed over without a number of duels. Sir Jonah Barrington gives a list of famous lawyers who had been often "out" with antagonists, and of judges who are said to have fought their way to the Bench; and his statements obtain ample verification in the works of contemporary historians.

In our own days it is difficult to realise that staid and dignified administrators of law, high-placed legislators of "credit and renown", not to speak of distinguished members of other learned professions, or of the nobility and gentry, engaged in encounters condemned alike of God and man; yet that is precisely what happened in Ireland, and, less extensively perhaps, in England and Scotland at the time mentioned.

Amongst the most famous of the duellists spoken of by writers of and concerning this period, was "Bully" Egan, chairman of quarter sessions for the county of Dublin, who was so good-natured that he never sentenced a malefactor without "blubbering on the bench", yet he fought more duels than any of his contemporaries. His most remarkable encounter was one that he had with the Master of the Rolls, at Donnybrook, in the presence of an immense crowd; it was, however, bloodless; the "bully" reserved his fire, and when his antagonist had discharged his pistol without effect, threw down his weapon, inviting the judge to "shake hands, or go to the devil".

It was no unusual thing, according to the same writers, for two opposing counsel to fall out in court in discussing a legal point, retire to a neighbouring field to settle it with pistols, and, if no blood was shed, as was generally the case, return to court to resume their business. Sir Jonah Barrington gives many illustrations of this comical contempt for the law held by its paid advocates, of one of which "Bully" Egan, already referred to, was the hero. That worthy person and a barrister named Keller had a tough law argument at the Waterford Assizes which became warm and personal, and both simultaneously retired from court. Everyone concerned knew perfectly well what was up, and calmly awaited the result. The two gentlemen both crossed the Suir to a field on the opposite bank, which happened to be in the county of Kilkenny, and, therefore, out of the jurisdiction of the presiding judge, where they exchanged shots without any harm being done. Having thus adjusted their differences satisfactorily, they returned to court to find the bench, bar, jury, and spectators patiently waiting to learn which of them had been killed.

Can anyone outside Bedlam now conceive such a scene possible? Or does it now seem credible that occupants of the highest positions on the judicial bench should have

had part as principals in distinctly illegal practices? Clearly not; but yet it is on record that Attorney-General Fitzgibbon, who was afterwards Lord-Chancellor of Ireland, fought with Curran, who was subsequently Master of the Rolls, with "enormous pistols twelve inches long"; that "Councillor" Scott, who became Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench and Earl of Clonmel, met Lord Tyrawly, the Earl of Llanduff, and many others in hostile encounter with swords and pistols; that Baron Metge, of the Exchequer, was "out" with his own brother-in-law, and with other people as well; that Judge Patterson, of the Common Pleas, fought three county gentlemen, and wounded them all; and that Lord Norbury, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, had encounters with "fighting" Fitzgerald, and many others. So tremendous was the reputation of this judge as a "fire-eater" that he was trusted by ministers of his party to frighten troublesome members of the opposition, and so rapid was his promotion in consequence that it was said he "shot up into preferment".

Equally illustrious people are mentioned as having indulged in this vicious and criminal propensity. The Hon. G. Ogle, a privy councillor, fought a duel with one Barney Coyle, a distiller of whiskey. The combatants are said to have been very determined, but ineffective, in their efforts to kill each other; they discharged four brace of pistols without result. Sir Hardinge Gifford, Chief Inspector of Ceylon, had a meeting with Harvey Bagenal, who was known subsequently as a rebel leader, by whom he was wounded. The eminent Grattan, leader of the Irish House of Commons, was also a duellist of note. He fought with and wounded the Hon. Isaac Corry, Chancellor of the Exchequer, for an alleged insult spoken during a debate on the Union. The Provost of Trinity College—that fountain-head of all the peaceful arts—was "out" with a Master in Chancery, whom he wounded, and his son, amenable to the parental example, had a hostile meeting with Lord Mountmorris.

Curiously enough, duelling was more generally practised during the continuance of the reformed Irish Parliament—from 1782 to 1800. As many as three hundred duels are said to have been fought by prominent personages within that period. Duelling clubs were established, to which no man could obtain admittance who could not show that he had exchanged a shot

or thrust with some antagonist. And it sometimes happened, as may be readily imagined, that the valour of the most confident challenger oozed out at his finger-ends before the firm front of the party challenged.

An occurrence that happened in February, 1783, is a case in point. A Member of Parliament, wearing the uniform of the Roscommon Volunteers, was assailed in a public room by a person with whom he was engaged in litigation, and for that reason he did not notice his assailant. His forbearance was misinterpreted by a young subaltern in the army who was present. Indignant at the supposed poltroonery of a gentleman wearing a military uniform, this impulsive youth snatched off the hat worn by the volunteer officer, tore the cockade from it, and trampled it under foot. As a matter of course, a challenge was the result, but the originator of the dispute soon learned that his antagonist bore the reputation of a daring and skilled duellist, and he lost no time in tendering an apology. But such a settlement of the quarrel would only be accepted on condition that atonement should be made for the insult in the same place where it was given, and under like circumstances. Accordingly the over-bumptious party was compelled to humbly beseech the pardon of the gentleman he had insulted in public, replace by another the cockade he had torn from his hat, and declare his conviction that his antagonist was well worthy of wearing it.

At this time, too, there were in Dublin men—who were supposed to be gentlemen—who seemed to have no other aim in life than to annoy and provoke their fellow-men into armed conflict. They were, in fact, reckless rowdies, whose exploits would nowadays earn for them, if not the reward of the halter, at least ensure them a long spell of degrading imprisonment. "Fighting" Fitzgerald was one of them. He made it a practice to stand in the middle of a narrow crossing in a dirty street, so that every passenger should either step into the mud or jostle him in passing, in which case the offending party was promptly challenged to fight. Another was Pat Power, of Donagle. He was a furious fire-eater, but an amusing character withal. He was rough of exterior, had small regard to his dress or personal appearance, and was possessed, besides, of a most mellifluous brogue. These peculiarities, while travelling in England, made him the object of

some practical jokes, which, however, rather recoiled on those designing them. For instance, on one occasion when seated in a tavern, a group of "bucks" of the period honoured him with their regards. They sent the waiter to him with a gold watch belonging to one of them, with the request that he would tell the time by it. Power calmly took possession of the watch, sent his servant to fetch his pistols, and, with one under each arm, approached his would-be tormentors, and politely requested to be introduced to the owner of the watch. The request was received in silence. He then put the watch in his pocket, declaring that he would keep it safe till called for, at the same time stating his name and where he was to be found, should the owner desire its return. It was not claimed. On another occasion, under similar circumstances, a waiter was sent to him with a plate of potatoes, which he ate with apparent relish. Then ascertaining from the attendant to whom he was indebted for the repast, he caused his servant to bring in two covered dishes, one of which was placed before the gentleman in question, and the other on the table at which he sat. The covers were removed, and under each a loaded pistol was seen. Power, taking up his weapon, cocked it, and invited his volunteer entertainer to do likewise, assuring that gentleman that, if he killed him, he was perfectly ready to give satisfaction to the friend who sat beside him. Needless to say, the practical joker declined the invitation. Another ferocious ruffian was Mr. Bryan Maguire. He had been in the army, and his favourite pastime was shoving peaceful people off the footways, and insulting passers-by from the windows of his dwelling-house, in the hope of inciting some of them to challenge him to fight. He was, however, rather farcical in his ferocity, seeing that he always kept his pistols within reach for use on every possible occasion. When he wanted to summon a servant, "to keep his hand in," he did so by firing at the bell-handle.

During all this time the laws against duelling were in effect a dead letter. Indeed, it would have been foolish to have put them in force, for judges, jurors, and advocates were all duellists, who were not ashamed to own the impeachment.

The custom, however, from the early part of the present century began gradually to fall into desuetude, and may be now said to be altogether extinct. We still hear sometimes of a challenge having been

sent from one gentleman to another, but the expected fight does not follow. For example, the O'Donoghue, an Irish Member of Parliament, a few years ago felt so bitterly aggrieved at being referred to by the present Sir Robert Peel as a "mannikin traitor"—a singularly inappropriate description, seeing that the "mannikin" mentioned stands some six feet odd in his boots—that he sent a challenge to the honourable baronet, who had the good sense to bring the matter under the notice of the Speaker of the House, and the O'Donoghue was not only baulked of the "satisfaction" he sought, but had to apologise as well. A similar result still later attended the attempt of Mr. O'Kelly, an Irish member, to provoke Mr. M'Coan, another Irish member, to fight a duel—the professed "fire-eater" had to eat his words, and withdraw his challenge, which it is not uncharitable to believe would not have been sent had there been the remotest possibility that it would be accepted.

Society certainly is no worse for the extinction of duelling, more especially as with it has departed the unrestrained license of coarse speech and freedom of manners which, as a rule, occasioned the quarrels that were held to be only satisfactorily adjusted by conflicts with deadly weapons.

VICTIMS.

BY THEO GIFT.

*Author of "Lil Lorimer," "An Alibi and its Price,"
Etc., Etc.*

CHAPTER IX. VERA GOES FOR RUSHES.

IF Messrs. Marstland and Burt had only had their house-boat brought down the river for a day or two to suit the latter's convenience, the fact of finding mutual friends settled at Weybridge decided them very soon on prolonging their stay near that pretty village for an indefinite period; and certainly they were far too great an acquisition to the society at Rose Villa for the inmates of that pleasant abode not to do their utmost to retain them. Indeed, as Naomi said, they could not even be considered as an extra tax on her powers of chaperonage, seeing that Burt, being married and mediaeval, was almost as good as a woman, while as for dear old George Marstland, he was such an old friend and good, steady fellow, that he might be trusted with the girls anywhere like a brother.

Perhaps it was for this reason that,

though Mr. and Mrs. Josephs had returned from Dublin and reclaimed their younger boys, Leah and Vera yielded to the hospitable entreaties of the Lucases, and agreed to remain at the riverside villa a little longer.

"Unless you would rather go home, dear," Leah had said to her friend. "It shall be just as you like, for you know I can stay with Naomi whenever I please; so if you would prefer to be back in London with the father and mother and me——"

"Only the children would not be there," put in Vera. "I do like your home and your father and mother very much, Leah, better even than this, and—and Mr. Lucas" (she was too polite to add Naomi), "but I can't bear the idea of leaving those dear little children; and you wouldn't like to go either, would you, just as your nice friend, Dr. Marstland, has come?"

A very slight flush came into Leah's cheek. Vera's phrase, "your friend", though scarcely conventional, gave her a curious feeling of pleasure keen enough to prevent her correcting it, and she only said laughingly:

"You do think him 'nice' now, then, Vera?"

"Oh yes; he is so bright and amusing, though I think his voice and eyes are very startling all the same, and I can't help feeling that if he were ever to be angry he would be very terrible. Indeed, I can't imagine anyone daring to make him so, can you?"

"Very easily," said Leah with some amusement. "Why, Vera, I've made him dreadfully angry lots of times, and I didn't find him very terrible even then."

"Ah, that is because you are as bright and clever as he is; and, besides, he could not be really angry with you. It would only be play-anger, like when he growls at Alix, and she screams, but clings to him all the tighter."

Leah shook her head—not ill-pleased, however.

"Wait till you witness our next battle, and see if you call it play then. But I am glad that my prediction was a true one, and that you don't dislike him as you pretended you were going to do."

"I didn't pretend. You know it was only that stupid mistake of mine made me say so; and as I have forgiven him for not wanting to be introduced to me, I think you might forgive me that."

"I have never admitted that he didn't want it," said Leah; "and if he did, it

was only because you would put on that horrible dress, and I am sure he has sufficiently repented himself of it since."

For Dr. Marstland had lost no time in making a full and frank recantation to Leah of his low opinion of her friend.

"You were quite right," he said. "She is a sweet little thing—the prettiest mixture of confidingness, timidity, and little prim ways that I ever saw; and those soft grey eyes, which seem always appealing to you not to take her in, or be cross to her, are very bewitching. I wonder if they ever looked cross themselves."

"I never saw them do so," said Leah, "and I hope no one would take her in. It would be only too easy to do so, considering how guileless she is."

"Guileless! Alix is a hardened coquette, and new-born lambs not in it beside her. She might have dropped out of some other planet, or been shut up in a convent all her life, for all the knowledge she has of the world in general; and as to an opinion of her own on any of the topics which even young ladies are given to discussing, if her mind was the whitest sheet of paper ever made it couldn't be more unscored by one."

"You have studied her, I see," said Leah, smiling gravely; "but do you mean that last remark for a compliment? I shouldn't take it as one."

Marstland flushed rather hotly.

"Undoubtedly I do. I spoke of her mind as being like a sheet of white paper, not a bag of pulp! You can write anything you like on paper, the wisest things and the most beautiful, and it will retain them. You can't write anything on pulp; and, though, of course, this is a very wonderful age for march of intellect and culture, and all that sort of thing, I must own that, if I had anything to do with a girl personally, I should like her to have some corner of her mind not so entirely filled up with her own opinions and prejudices that I could not have the pleasure of planting in there some of mine."

"Frank, at any rate, and truly like a man!" said Leah, laughing; "though hardly, perhaps, the man who used so often to come bothering Naomi and me to advise him, and make up his mind for him, in old days." Then, as Marstland was going to make some eager protest: "No, don't pay me any compliments; I was not fishing for them, unless indeed——"

"Unless what?"

"I was only going to say, unless you would take my advice now."

"Now, or any time. I have never had a better adviser, and never wish for one. What is it?"

"Not to write anything on this sheet of white paper we are speaking of that its parents and owners would not approve of. Vera is so happy here, it would be hard if she were never let come to stay with us again."

The young man looked at her in some astonishment.

"Is thy servant a dog, that thou shouldst ask him this thing?" he said. "Or what are these parents and owners like for such an idea to be possible?"

"Not like you or me," answered Leah, and then blushed a scorching blush at the innocent juxtaposition of the pronouns. Fortunately Marstland did not notice it. "Nor, I should think, like the generality of Breton gentry. They are very lofty gentlefolk, of course. Indeed, though not particularly well off—rather the reverse, indeed—and though the father is a surly, lowering sort of man, who potters about his farm all day, dressed in the shabbiest of clothes, I know that he comes of a very good old family, expects the slightest word from his lips to be received with the abject submission of the laws of the Medes and Persians, and would rather perish than allow his wife or daughter to associate with the wealthy bourgeois of Quimper or Pont l'Abbé. Indeed, they lead the most utterly isolated life."

"But the mother—she is English, isn't she?"

"Yes; but she is more a mystery to me than her husband, though not an interesting one; devoted to her daughter, but not demonstrative even to her, and curiously narrow-minded, timid, and uncommunicative towards the rest of the world—the most timid woman I ever saw, and more exclusive even than M. St. Laurent. Vera was not allowed half as much vulgar liberty as a young Duchess or a Princess of the blood royal, and has been so entirely occupied all her life in learning the commandment, 'Thou shalt not do this or that,' that I don't think she has even begun to learn what she may do. Of course I don't pretend to know much about the ways and habits of the English upper-upper-ten," said Leah, with so frank and sweet a smile that it would have made any protest an impertinence. "And perhaps my being of a different race altogether would make me more unfit to pronounce on them. They must always be different

from me; but my feeling at Les Châtaigniers always was that I was living in a glass house among glass people. One was afraid to move or speak, lest one should break something."

"And such excessive brittleness does not suggest solidity, I see," said Marstland slowly. "However, the names of the upper ten are well enough known. Who was madame before her marriage?"

"I don't know. She never once alluded to her own family."

"But hasn't Miss St. Laurent any relations in England?"

"She thinks not. You will hardly believe it, but she does not even know her own mother's maiden-name. She told me she asked her the question once when she was a little girl, but was rebuked so severely for vulgar inquisitiveness, she never even thought of repeating it. I must say I couldn't see the sin myself, though I didn't tell her so, for Vera's simplicity has provided her with a very happy creed. Whatever her elders say is right. It never occurs to her to question it."

Marstland gave his mouth a comical twist.

"It seems to me your mystery is easy enough to read, especially by the light of certain very funny little ways and expressions which, I may tell you—who, let me remind your modesty, belong to the oldest and most aristocratically exclusive commonwealth in the world—have occasionally startled me in a young lady who was supposed to hail from the 'vieille noblesse'. 'Upper - upper - ten people,' my dear Leah, don't sit on the extreme edge of their chairs, or use the name of the person they are speaking to at every second word, or talk of 'ungenteel conduct', of someone being 'quite the lady', or an objection to 'peruse anything that is not quite nice'. If Miss St. Laurent has never known any other society than her mother's, depend on it, monsieur made a foolish marriage some years ago, and robbed his mother of her lady's-maid. Some of the French 'grandes dames' affect English maids as ours do French ones; and had madame been a peasant girl she would have had too much of nature's dignity to be ashamed of her antecedents, especially before her own daughter. Anyhow, the latter is charming enough in spite of her. And now, to turn to something else, mind, Leah, neither you nor Naomi dare to bring a crumb of anything with you to-morrow. If you can't trust yourselves to the resources of male hospitality for a picnic you ought

to do so, especially as I am ready to vow and declare that the butcher who supplies the meat shall have had his certificate, signed by the Chief Rabbi himself, if required, and that the pastry shall have no lard in it. The Talmud doesn't say anything about chocolate-creams and other sweets, does it?"

"Dr. Marstland, you are too bad altogether," said Leah. But she could not help smiling at him at the same time, and Marstland knew she was not offended.

The subject in question was a picnic which he and Burt were getting up on board their house-boat for the morrow. The Lucases, with Leah and Vera, were to be there, and one or two other friends, and they were to have luncheon on board the boat first, followed by a row up the river for those who liked it, and fishing for those who didn't; to wind up with tea, music, and cigars—a "smoking concert", as Marstland put it, till the moon was high enough to light the party home.

The programme sounded well, and, what was, perhaps, more wonderful, it went off still better. For one thing the day was perfect, not too hot—despite all that the poets and romancers say, it seldom is too hot on the Thames in late August; while a slight shower or two, which fell in the morning, had just sufficed to make the brilliant sunshine afterwards more enjoyable, freshen the somewhat fading verdure of the banks, and lend an exquisite blueness to the distance, and crispness to the lights and shadows, which would have made the most commonplace scenery charming.

The house-boat, too, presented a very inviting appearance. It was a large one, and by no means uncomfortably furnished, Marstland having a private fortune of his own and a very good idea of using it. What with pots and baskets of flowers, which he had scoured the country to procure, and which, suspended from every point of the roof-eaves, reflected their glowing colours in the water below; what with snowy muslin-curtains looped back by red ribands to the tiny windows, and long American and low basket-chairs scattered about the snowy upper deck; what with Mr. Burt's series of *Thames-side Sketches* displayed for the art-lovers, baskets of fruit and sweetmeats for the young ladies, unlimited cigars for the gentlemen, and iced claret-cup, illustrated papers and magazines for everybody, the aspect of this floating home excited such general admiration that

Miss James, an enthusiastic young lady in æsthetic attire, who, with her father and brother, formed Burt's contingent to the party, declared she should like nothing better than to live in it for ever and ever. Marstland promptly responded by entreating her to become its mistress from that moment; and Vera stared at them both with great, wide-opened eyes, wondering if this was really a proposal, and, if so, how he could have the heart to make it in Leah's very presence, and she to listen with such smiling unconcern. She decided that poor Dolly James was a very bold young lady, and shuddered to think what mamma would have said of her had she been there.

But though Vera herself said less, perhaps, in the way of admiration and pleasure than any of the rest of the party, it may be doubted if she did not feel more of both than all the rest of them put together. To her, after the almost conventional seclusion, the narrowness and repression of anything like youthful gaiety or freedom in her past life; after the bleak, windswept moors, the grey rocks and boisterous seas of Finisterre; all this gaiety and brightness, this smiling river flowing between its low green shores, and dotted with innumerable gaily-painted craft, bonny girl-faces and white-flannelled youths, this banter and repartee, freedom and friendliness on every side, seemed more like some dream of fairyland than anything real or tangible. Indeed she almost dreaded to speak or move lest she should wake suddenly from it, and find herself back under the grey, gnarled apple-trees in the orchard, or gazing out from the high window of her bare little room over the long, flat colza-fields which stretched away to the grey "dunes" and dark sea-line of St. Tryphine.

Some girls might have disturbed themselves by wonderings whether it was not wrong to shrink so terribly from the idea of going back to their own home and the parents in whom their life had hitherto centred; but Vera was not of an introspective nature, and had been as little trained to mental examination as to home tenderness. The mere prospect of that old dull life, the solitary walks, the aimless monotony of reading and practising, the uninteresting conversations between her mother and Joanna on nothing more exciting than domestic worries and economies—worse than all, the dreary evenings with those three grave, middle-aged faces bent over the whist or *bézique* table, chilled and depressed her, and as she stood alone at

the bow-end of the boat, to which she had wandered through the door leading out at that end of the cabin, her heart sank so low that something like tears glittered in her eyes and dimmed the beauty of the scene before her. They might have fallen in another moment but for an interruption.

"Miss St. Laurent," said George Marstland's hearty voice at her shoulder, "what is the matter? Have you quarrelled with the world, or has the world quarrelled with you, that you are standing here all alone and forlorn?"

Tea was over, and the rest of the party, to whom the arrival from town of Albert Lucas had just imparted a little fresh excitement, were enjoying themselves in pleasantly lazy fashion at the other end of the boat. Captain James, a retired old naval officer, Lucas himself with his little Alix on his knee, and Naomi leaning comfortably back in a long chair, made a group by themselves on the upper deck; while in the cabin Dolly James, perched on the table with her lap full of Burt's sketches, listened with enthusiastic interest to the explanations of them, which he was imparting to her with perhaps more low-toned fervour than Mrs. Burt would have altogether approved of, had she been there. Beyond the cabin, on the little open space at the stern, sat Leah Josephs, making a pretty picture as seen through the doorway, with her dark hair, delicate features, and pale pink boating-costume all lit up by the last rays of the setting sun, and her slender hands busy with some sheets of loose music, from which young James, reclining at her feet with his violin across his knees, was entreating her to select something to sing. Little Benjy stood near her, fishing solemnly still, and shouting to his friend the doctor to come and help with his line; and Leah herself had appealed to the same gentleman a moment before to assist in the selection of her song; but Marstland had not quite answered to the expectation of either.

"One moment, Benjy, lad. Sing? Oh, sing whatever you like best yourself, Leah. You're sure to do it better than anyone else could," he had said heartily enough.

But he did not stay, only cast an enquiring glance round, and passed through to the other end of the boat, whither he fancied he had seen a little figure retreat a few moments before.

As host, it was of course his duty to see that no one was neglected, the greatest stranger least of all; but in truth Vera's soft eyes and liquid voice had awakened

an interest in him to which Leah's sketch of her home and up-bringing had added a touch of compassionate tenderness; and now, as she looked up at him with the timid flush and start which almost made him wish she were younger, that he might stoop down as he would to Alix, and reassure her with a kiss, he saw that her eyes were moist. Yet she answered him smiling:

"I am not forlorn. I was only thinking."

"What about? It is very rude to think at picnics, you know."

"Is it really?" But his laugh answered her, and she went on: "I only came here to look at the sunset-colour on the water; and then I wondered what sort of an evening it was at St. Tryphine, and got thinking of home."

"And wishing yourself back there and away from all of us? That is too bad of you, Miss St. Laurent, when we all want so much to make you happy here. I shall tell Leah."

"Oh no; please don't! Indeed, I was not wishing that;" but, though she blushed crimson, she could not own how different her thoughts had been, and, to prevent his asking her, added hurriedly: "I had been wishing a few minutes back that I had been able to get some of those feathery reeds we passed on our way up the river. Leah was wanting some the other day, and I saw quite a number on the little islet just beyond that bend of the river there."

"Did you? Why not get them now, then?"

"Now? But I could not—could I?"

"Why not? Nothing easier. Here is the dingy," pointing to the little boat which was rocking on the water at her feet, "and here am I ready to pull you to your island in a dozen strokes and cut as many rushes as you please. Get in." But Vera protested very honestly and with crimson cheeks against such a notion. She had not thought of it for a moment. She would not dream of letting him take so much trouble; and it was only when he assured her it would be a pleasure, not a trouble, adding jestingly, "Besides, you forget; it is not for you, but for Leah," that she yielded, and said quite simply:

"Ah, so it will be, and you will like that. But I must ask leave first."

"Leave? Nonsense! Why should you?"

"Oh, but I must, please. I never do anything unless I am told I may;" and with a mild kind of persistence which amused by its contrast to her usual ductility she passed through the cabin, and going to Leah's side, asked: "Leah, might

I get some rushes with Dr. Marstland? He says he will cut some for me. May he?"

Leah looked up at her, colouring in a way Vera did not at all understand. She understood, of course—knew that it was the very simplicity of long tutelage which merely led Vera to transfer the maternal authority which usually guided her to the friend to whom her mother had entrusted her; but she also knew and realised keenly that no one else present would believe in such a spirit of childish docility in one grown-up girl to another; and that the request must seem to bear some special application to her own feelings or rights over the person alluded to. For once she spoke almost sharply:

"May you, Vera! Why, of course. Why do you ask me? Aren't we all amusing ourselves as we please? Mr. James, this is the song I meant. Now, will you try over the air first, and then I'll begin."

Vera went away satisfied. She had "got leave", and next moment had stepped into the tiny boat in which Marstland was standing up waiting to put her in the seat and give her the tiller-ropes. That done, he took the sculls, and pulled out into the stream.

For the first two or three minutes neither of them spoke. It was getting late. The hundred and one craft that had dotted the river earlier in the day, the big steam-launches puffing clouds of smoke and raising great waves on its glassy surface, the swift four-oars, and deftly-paddled canoes, were gone now; and the sun had set behind a light bank of vapour, leaving sky and stream suffused with a delicate rosy glow. A few silvery clouds floated softly across this haze of rose above, while the dip, dip of the oars, or the splash and spring of a moorhen sent showers of silver from the rosy bath below. It was all an enchanted dream of rose and silver—silver and rose. Even the stately swans sailed by under the shadow of the woods with rose-flushed plumage and beaks tipped with argent; even the bending willow-trees took a roseate tinge, and tossed their thin grey leaves, silver-lined, against the blushing sky. There was no other boat—no other human being in sight. They seemed, in their white clothes, like two silvery figures gliding through a mist of crimson glory, and Vera's heart so swelled with delight that it was some minutes before she could even breathe out:

"Oh, how lovely it is! Too lovely to be real."

Marstland had been looking at her more than the scene, wondering he had never thought her lovely before; wondering if she had ever looked as much so as at that moment; her delicate figure in its simple gown of white serge, her pure child-face with its exquisite oval of cheek and chin, its softly-parted lips and tender eyes, her slender, helpless hands, and the little knitted bérêt (Leah's gift) made of white wool and pressed down over those soft, ruddy locks. Something rose in his throat—something foolish and impetuous; but he choked it down, and only answered coolly:

"You like it?"

"Oh, it is like floating through Paradise. One would like to go on for ever."

"Then let us go a little farther at present. It is prettier beyond the islet here, and we can get the rushes coming back."

Vera assented eagerly, but then be-thought herself.

"If you will not be tired?"

"Tired! I! What can you think of my muscles? I am as strong as King Comorre himself."

Vera laughed a little.

"I do not know about his strength; but you are not as bad—I am sure of that."

"How can you tell?"

The girl's colour rose.

"I—I don't think you would be Leah's friend if you were, or that Benjy and Alix would be so fond of you."

"If Alix and Benjy's fondness is a test of virtue, how good you must be!" he said, laughing, but pleased. "Well, I hope I am not as bad as King Comorre. I haven't murdered five wives yet. The worst of me is, as my people would tell you, that I have been too selfish hitherto to earn one."

Vera's face said she did not comprehend, so he went on:

"You see, the fact is, I'm rather handicapped in life. I belong to the profession I prefer to any other, and I have money enough of my own not to need to make more by it. Ergo, as yet I haven't made more. I have revelled in sick-rooms, certainly; but they were of the really sick poor, wanting food to fill their stomachs as much as medicine to heal their pains—not of sham invalids in luxurious chambers; and I have triumphed in two or three successful operations, but on wretched crossing-sweepers, run over by some passing dray, or penniless maids-of-all-work, maimed before they were women by incessant over-work; not on fashionable

patients with large fees and abstruse, pleasure-induced diseases. That's all very well for a bachelor, and my own income has kept me very comfortably, and helped me to keep a good many of these poor wretches without more; but, as my sister, Lady Hessey, said when she persuaded me to go in for a share in this West End practice I've just bought, it wouldn't keep a wife as well, and a wife wouldn't stand it if it would."

"Leah would, I am sure," said Vera quickly. "She is fond of poor people, too. She was always going into the peasants' houses at St. Tryphine, and talking to and helping them. I did not. Mamma does not think it quite nice for me, but I often wished I might when I saw her. The people looked out for Leah, and smiled when they saw her. They used to say Dr. Dupré neglected them for the rich people. I am certain she would think your way much the nobler, and she would help you beautifully."

It was a long speech for Vera, and perhaps fortunately so, for it gave Marstland time to recover from the start and stare of undisguised amazement with which he received her first words. He said rather abruptly:

"Leah and her family have often helped me. They are all excellent friends to the poor—their own poor especially. But why should you single her out as if—" he stopped short, and laughed with some embarrassment. Vera looked more embarrassed still.

"Was I wrong? I beg your pardon," she stammered humbly; "but I forgot—I mean when you were talking of a wife I—I fancied you were naturally thinking of Leah."

It was Marstland's turn to colour.

"Why 'naturally'?" he said sharply. "You did not think we were in love with one another, did you? Surely no one has said—"

"Oh no, no!" cried Vera in great distress; "no one—nobody. It was only that I thought—I took it for granted you—indeed, I am very sorry, but I did not think you could help it."

"Help what? Falling in love with Leah? Well, perhaps I couldn't, if such a thought had ever entered my mind. As it is, it is fortunate for me that it didn't, for I am sure it would never have entered hers, and I like Leah Josephs too well, I respect her too heartily, to risk losing her

friendship by posturing before her as a rejected suitor. Surely, Miss St. Laurent, you are not cruel enough to wish to see me in that humiliating rôle?"

"Oh no," Vera began, but stopped short, blushing vehemently.

How could she tell this chestnut-haired, strong-limbed man, with the bright, keen eyes and dominant voice, that no idea of anyone rejecting him had occurred to her mind? Even to her simplicity this would have been, in her mother's and Joanna's phraseology (which reversed the usual acceptation of the phrase) "rather particular", not to say unseemly.

"I am afraid I have been very silly and—and rude, too," she said falteringly; "but somehow I fancied—I do love Leah so."

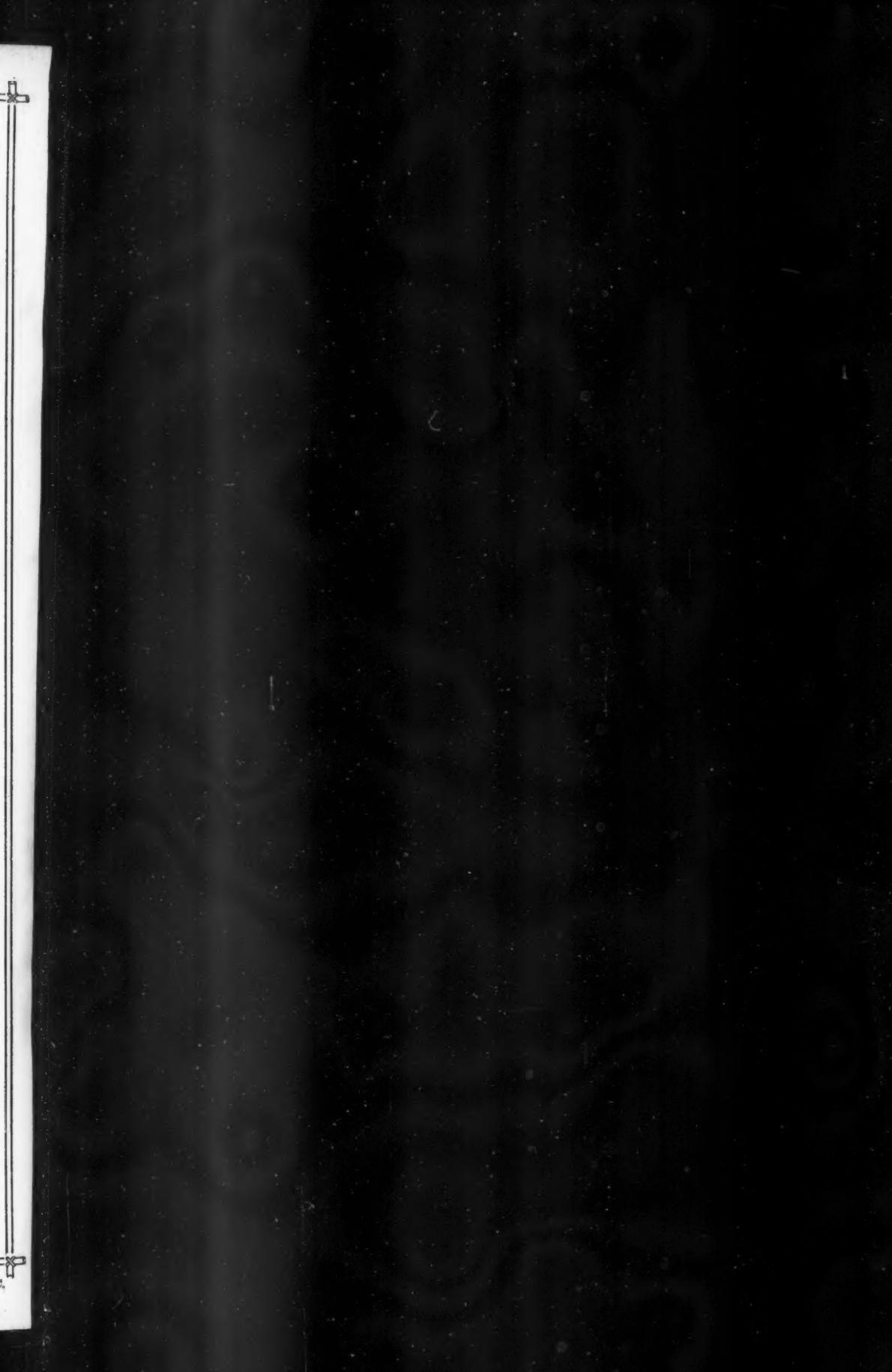
"That you fancied no one worth calling her friend could help loving her too! Well, Miss St. Laurent, I thank you for the compliment, for I know it is one from you; and you are right. As a friend, as a sister, if you like, I love and honour Leah Josephs as well as you do. That we have never even thought of one another in any other way is natural enough, too, if you come to think of it. For one thing, she is a Jewess and I a Christian."

"Yes; but oh, surely—would that matter?" Vera stammered, beginning to feel pitiful over both as martyrs to their religion.

"I am inclined to think that if one loved a woman and was loved by her in your sense of the word, nothing would 'matter'; but in the opposite case I do believe in race-differences as making a bar to the idea of marriage. I hope Leah, and Leah's husband when she marries, will be my friends to the end of our joint lives; but I am nearly as certain that that husband will be a Hebrew as that my wife—if I ever get one—will be a Christian. She is immensely loyal to her people. It is one of the finest traits in her."

"Only"—Vera spoke wistfully, almost sadly; the idea of Leah wasted on an Albert Lucas or a young Rosenberg seemed terrible to her—"I cannot imagine how any man who knows her could like even the very nicest Christian girl better."

"Cannot you?" said Marstland, smiling. He bent down over his oars so as to look into her face, the sweet, pale young face so unconscious of its own tender charm, so spiritual-looking in the fading rose-light, the silvery shadows of the evening. "Somehow—just now—I think I can!"





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